

Message Text

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APPROVED BY AF:LWALKER

AF/W:EESVENDSEN

AID/AFR:EWILKINSON

HA:RMAXIM

L:WRHODES (INFO)

-----119017 220415Z /62

R 212045Z DEC 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 304038

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, EAID, SL

SUBJECT:HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: USAID INCREASED
REVENUE FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

1. SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: AS PART OF A GENERAL REVIEW OF ALL PENDING AID FIRST QUARTER FY-78 PROJECTS FOR AFRICA, THE STAFF GROUP OF THE INTERAGENCY GROUP ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN ASSISTANCE HAS REVIEWED SUBJECT PROJECT AND HAS RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION BE DELAYED PENDING RECEIPT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CURRENT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN SIERRA LEONE. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO PROVIDE SUCH INFORMATION WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO PERCEIVED PROBLEM AREAS AS OUTLINED BELOW. END SUMMARY.

2. THE STAFF GROUP OF THE INTERAGENCY GROUP ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN ASSISTANCE IS COMPRISED OF WORKING LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES FROM SEVERAL DEPARTMENT BUREAUS INCLUDING AF, EB, L, S/P AND HA, AS WELL AS FROM OTHER AGENCIES INCLUDING AID AND TREASURY. THE STAFF GROUP REVIEWS ALL UP-COMING AID AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION (IFI) PROJECTS FOR CONFORMITY WITH EXISTING HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, AND MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INTERAGENCY GROUP ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

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SENTATIVES FROM SEVERAL DEPARTMENT BUREAUS INCLUDING AF, EB, L, S/P AND HA, AS WELL AS FROM OTHER AGENCIES INCLUDING AID AND TREASURY. THE STAFF GROUP REVIEWS ALL UP-COMING AID AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION (IFI) PROJECTS FOR CONFORMITY WITH EXISTING HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, AND MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INTERAGENCY GROUP ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

CHAired BY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY (THE CHRISTOPHER GROUP). IN CASES WHERE BILATERAL OR IFI PROJECTS BENEFIT COUNTRIES HAVING GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS, THE STAFF GROUP ROUTINELY RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OR OTHER POSITIVE USG ACTION. IN CASES WHERE THESE PROJECTS BENEFIT A COUNTRY PERCEIVED TO HAVE A POOR OR QUESTIONABLE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, THE STAFF GROUP EXAMINES THE LOAN OR PROJECT TO ASCERTAIN IF THAT LOAN OR PROJECT SUBSTANTIALLY BENEFITS THE POOREST PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY (I.E., MEETS BASIC HUMAN NEEDS CRITERIA). IN CASES WHERE THESE CRITERIA ARE MET, THE STAFF GROUP WILL NORMALLY RECOMMEND THAT THE PROJECT OR LOAN BE APPROVED. THE GROUP MAY ALSO RECOMMEND TO THE CHRISTOPHER GROUP THAT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH POSITIVE ACTION ON THE PROJECT, US REPRESENTATIVES TAKE ANY ONE ACTION OR COMBINATION OF ACTIONS DESIGNED TO CONFORM WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS OF VARIOUS LAWS REGARDING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND WITH ADMINISTRATION HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. THESE ACTIONS RANGE FROM A DIPLOMATIC DEMARCHE TO A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS. IF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS CRITERIA ARE NOT MET, THE STAFF GROUP MAY RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL OF THE PROJECT, OR--IN THE CASE OF AN IFI LOAN--AN ABSTENTION OR A NO VOTE COUPLED WITH A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE STATEMENT OF CONCERN. IN ANY EVENT, THE FINAL DECISION RESTS WITH THE INTERAGENCY GROUP CHAired BY DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER.

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3. IN THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE, THE STAFF GROUP RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF THE USAID RURAL ROAD PENETRATION PROJECT (1.8 MILLION) ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIS PROJECT CLEARLY MEETS BASIC HUMAN NEEDS CRITERIA. WITH REGARD TO THE SECOND FY-78 SIERRA LEONE PROJECT UP FOR REVIEW (THE \$200 THOUSAND INCREASED REVENUE FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM) THE STAFF GROUP COULD NOT ESTABLISH THAT THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED TO MEET DIRECTLY BASIC HUMAN NEEDS AS CURRENTLY DEFINED. THE STAFF GROUP, THEREFORE, AGREED TO DELAY ACTION ON THIS GRANT PENDING CLARIFICATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN SIERRA LEONE.

4. SPECIFICALLY, HA RAISED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE TREND OF HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE IN SIERRA LEONE. THESE QUESTIONS WERE BASED ON THE RECENT (NOVEMBER 1977) AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORTING (POUCHED TO EMBASSY FREETOWN) ON VIOLENCE AND POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED ARRESTS SURROUNDING THE 1977 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. AMNESTY STATES IT HAS RECEIVED REPORTS OF ABOUT 500 POLITICAL PRISONERS BEING HELD, AND SPECIFICALLY MENTIONS THE FOLLOWING OPPOSITION SLPP POLITICIANS AS BEING ARRESTED AND DETAINED AT THE TIME OF THE MAY 6 ELECTIONS: REGINA JAMES, KANDE

BUREH, SANUSI MUSTAPHA, DAUDA SANDI, AND CHARLES F. MARGAI. ALSO NOTED AS ARRESTED DURING THIS PERIOD ARE SALAMI COKER, DIRECTOR OF RADIO AND TV, AND F.M. CAREW, A BARRISTER WHO DEFENDED SEVERAL PERSONS EXECUTED FOR POLITICAL OFFENSES IN JULY 1975. THE AMNESTY REPORT STATED THAT REGINA JAMES WAS ALLEGEDLY RAPED AND BEATEN IN BONTHE BY SEVEN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS ON NOMINATION DAY, AND IS STILL IN PRISON. AMNESTY'S "URGENT ACTION" REPORT OF DECEMBER 1977 ALSO LISTS DR. HADJ CONTEH AS ONE OF THOSE SLPP POLITICIANS BEING DETAINED WITHOUT CHARGES.

5. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO PROVIDE ALL POSSIBLE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE WHEREABOUTS AND LEGAL STATUS OF ALL PERSONS NAMED ABOVE AS POLITICAL DETAINEES IN THE
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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT. ARE THEY STILL UNDER ARREST AND, IF SO, HAVE CHARGES BEEN LEVIED AND DUE PROCESS BEEN FOLLOWED? STAFF GROUP WILL RECONSIDER SUBJECT GRANT PROJECT WHEN THIS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE. MEANWHILE, PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IS SUSPENDED. VANCE

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